



"OVER THE TOP"

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WHO WENT

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

MACHINE GUNNER, SERVING IN FRANCE

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FOREWORD

"Over the Top" is a true story of trench warfare on the French front, written by an American soldier who got into the great war two years ahead of his country. Sergeant Empey tells what the fighting men have done and how they have done it. He knows because he was one of them. His experiences are grim, but they are thrilling, and they are lightened by a delightful touch of humor.

CHAPTER I.

From Mufti to Khaki.

It was in an office in Jersey City. I was sitting at my desk talking to a Lieutenant of the Jersey National Guard. On the wall was a big war map decorated with various colored little flags showing the position of the opposing armies on the western front in France. In front of me on the desk lay a New York paper with big flaring headlines:

LUSITANIA SUNK! AMERICAN LIVES LOST!

The windows were open and a feeling of spring pervaded the air. Through the open windows came the strains of a hurdy-gurdy playing in the street—"I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier."

"Lusitania Sunk! American Lives Lost!"—"I Didn't Raise My Boy to Be a Soldier." To us these did not seem to jibe.

The lieutenant in silence opened one of the lower drawers of his desk and took from it an American flag which he solemnly draped over the war map on the wall. Then, turning to me with a grim face, said:

"How about it, sergeant? You had better get out the muster roll of the Mounted Scouts, as I think they will be needed in the course of a few days."

We bustled ourselves till late in the evening writing out emergency telegrams for the men to report when the call should come from Washington. Then we went home.

I crossed over to New York, and as I went up Fulton street to take the subway to Brooklyn, the lights in the tall buildings of New York seemed to be burning brighter than usual, as if they, too, had read "Lusitania Sunk! American Lives Lost!" They seemed to be glowing with anger and righteous indignation, and their rays wiggled the message, "Repay!"

Months passed, the telegrams lying handy, but covered with dust. Then, one morning, mornalng the lieutenant with a sigh of disgust removed the flag from the war map and returned to his desk. I immediately followed this action by throwing the telegrams into the wastebasket. Then we looked at each other in silence. He was squirming in his chair and I felt depressed as I uneasy.

The telephone rang and I answered it. It was a business call for me, requesting my services for an out-of-town assignment. Business was not very good, so this was very welcome. After listening to the proposition I seemed to be swayed by a peculiarly strong force within me, and answered, "I am sorry that I cannot accept your offer, but I am leaving for England next week," and hung up the receiver. The lieutenant swung around in his chair, and stared at me in blank astonishment. A sinking sensation came over me, but I defiantly answered his look with, "Well, it's so. I'm going." And I went.

The trip across was uneventful. I landed at Tilbury, England, then got into a string of matchbox cars and proceeded to London, arriving there about 10 p. m. I took a room in a hotel near St. Pancras station for "five and six-pence extra." The room was minus the fire, but the "extra" seemed to keep me warm. That night there was a Zeppelin raid, but I didn't see much of it, because the slit in the curtain was too small and I had no desire to make it larger. Next morning the telephone bell rang, and someone asked, "Are you there?" I was, hardly. Anyway, I learned that the Zeps had returned to their fatherland, so I went out into the street expecting to see scenes of awful devastation and a cowering populace, but everything was normal. People were calmly proceeding to their work. Crossing the street, I accosted a Bobble with:

"Can you direct me to the place of damage?" He asked me, "What damage?" In surprise, I answered, "Why, the damage caused by the Zeps."

With a wink he replied: "There was no damage; we missed them again."

After several fruitless inquiries of the passersby, I decided to go on my own in search of ruined buildings and scenes of destruction. I boarded a bus which carried me through Tottenham Court road. Recruiting posters were everywhere. The one that impressed me most was a life-size picture of Lord Kitchener with his finger pointing directly at me, under the caption of "Your King and Country Need You." No matter which way I turned, the accusing finger followed me. I was an American, in mufti, and had a little American flag in the lapel of my coat. I had no king, and my country had seen fit not to need me, but still that pointing finger made me feel small and ill at ease. I got off the bus to try to dissipate this feeling by mixing with the throng of the sidewalks.

Presently I came to a recruiting office. Inside, sitting at a desk was a lonely Tommy Atkins. I decided to interview him in regard to joining the British army. I opened the door. He looked up and greeted me with "I s'y, mate, want to tyke on?"

I looked at him and answered, "Well, whatever that is, I'll take a chance at it."

Without the aid of an interpreter, I found out that Tommy wanted to know if I cared to join the British army. He asked me: "Did you ever hear of the Royal Fusiliers?" Well, in London, you know, Yanks are supposed to know everything, so I was not going to appear ignorant and answered, "Sure."

After listening for one half-hour to Tommy's tale of their exploits on the firing line, I decided to join. Tommy took me to the recruiting headquarters, where I met a typical English captain. He asked my nationality. I immediately pulled out my American passport and showed it to him. It was signed



Guy Empey.

by Lansing. After looking at the passport, he informed me that he was sorry but could not enlist me, as it would be a breach of neutrality. I insisted that I was not neutral, because to me it seemed that a real American could not be neutral when big things were in progress, but the captain would not enlist me.

With disgust in my heart I went out in the street. I had gone about a block when a recruiting sergeant who had followed me out of the office tapped me on the shoulder with his swagger stick and said: "S'y, I can get you in the army. We have a 'leftenant' down at the other office who can do anything. He has just come out of the O. T. C. (Officers' Training corps) and does not know what neutrality is." I decided to take a chance, and accepted his invitation for an introduction to the lieutenant. I entered the office and went up to him, opened up my passport and said:

"Before going further I wish to state that I am an American, not too proud to fight, and want to join your army."

He looked at me in a nonchalant manner, and answered, "That's all right; we take anything over here."

I looked at him kind of hard and replied, "So I notice," but it went over his head.

He got out an enlistment blank, and placing his finger on a blank line said, "Sign here."

I answered, "Not on your tintype."

"I beg your pardon?"

Then I explained to him that I would not sign it without first reading it. I read it over and signed for duration of war. Some of the recruits were lucky. They signed for seven years only!

Then he asked me my birthplace. I answered, "Ogden, Utah."

He said, "Oh, yes, just outside of New York?"

With a smile, I replied, "Well, it's up the state a little."

Then I was taken before the doctor, and passed as physically fit, and was issued a uniform. When I reported back to the lieutenant, he suggested that, being an American, I go on recruiting service and try to shame some of the slackers into joining the army.

"All you have to do," he said, "is to go out on the street, and when you see a young fellow in mufti who looks physically fit, just stop him and give him this kind of a talk: 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself, a Britisher, physically fit, and in mufti when your king and country need you? Don't you know that your country is at war and that the place for every young Briton is on the firing line? Here I am, an American, in khaki, who came four thousand miles to fight for your king and country, and you, as yet, have not enlisted. Why don't you join? Now is the time.'"

"This argument ought to get many recruits, Empey, so go out and see what you can do."

He then gave me a small rosette of red, white and blue ribbon, with three little streamers hanging down. This was the recruiting insignia and was to be worn on the left side of the cap. Armed with a swagger stick and my patriotic rosette, I went out into Tottenham Court road in quest of cannon fodder.

Two or three poorly dressed civilians passed me, and although they appeared physically fit, I said to myself, "They don't want to join the army; perhaps they have someone dependent on them for support," so I did not accost them.

Coming down the street I saw a young dandy, top hat and all, with a fashionably dressed girl walking beside him. I muttered, "You are my meat," and when he came abreast of me I stepped directly in his path and stopped him with my swagger stick, saying:

"You would look fine in khaki; why not change that top hat for a steel helmet? Aren't you ashamed of yourself, a husky young chap like you in mufti when men are needed in the trenches? Here I am, an American, came four thousand miles from Ogden, Utah, just outside of New York, to fight for your king and country. Don't be a slacker, buck up and get into uniform; come over to the recruiting office and I'll have you enlisted."

He yawned and answered, "I don't care if you came forty thousand miles, no one asked you to," and he walked on. The girl gave me a sneering look; I was speechless.

I recruited for three weeks and nearly got one recruit.

This perhaps was not the greatest stunt in the world, but it got back to the officer who had told me, "Yes, we take anything over here." I had been spending a good lot of my recruiting time in the saloon bar of the Wheat Sheaf pub there was a very attractive blonde barmaid, who helped kill time—I was not as serious in those days as I was a little later when I reached the front)—well, it was the sixth day and my recruiting report was blank. I was getting low in the pocket—barmaids haven't much use for anyone who cannot buy drinks—so I looked around for recruiting material. You know a man on recruiting service gets a "bob" or shilling for every recruit he entices into joining the army, the recruit is supposed to get this, but he would not be a recruit if he were wise to this fact, would he?

Down at the end of the bar was a young fellow in mufti who was very patriotic—he had about four "Old Six" ales aboard. He asked me if he could join, showed me his left hand, two fingers were missing, but I said that did not matter as "we take anything over here." The left hand is the rifle hand as the place is carried at the slope on the left shoulder. Nearly everything in England is "by the left," even general traffic keeps to the port side.

I took the applicant over to headquarters, where he was hurriedly examined. Recruiting surgeons were busy in those days and did not have much time for thorough physical examinations. My recruit was passed as "fit" by the doctor and turned over to a corporal to make note of his scars. I was mystified. Suddenly the corporal burst out with, "Blime me, two of his fingers are gone." Turning to me he said, "You certainly have your nerve with you, not 'alf you ain't, to bring this beggar in."

The doctor came over and exploded, "What do you mean by bringing in a man in this condition?"

Looking out of the corner of my eye I noticed that the officer who had recruited me had joined the group, and I could not help answering, "Well, sir, I was told that you took anything over here."

I think they called it "Yankee impudence," anyhow it ended my recruiting.

In training quarters, "somewhere in France," Empey hears the big guns booming and makes the acquaintance of the "cooties." Read about his experiences in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Newport News."

In Virginia's early days communication with the mother country was, of course, wholly by ships, and when one was expected the colonists were all eagerness for the news from home. On the occasion of one, it may have been the first, of a certain Captain Newport's expected return from England, at or near the place now bearing his name, a large number of persons collected to receive "Newport's news." Hence the name, now shortened to its present form.

GERMANS CROSS THE SOMME RIVER

TERRIBLE SLAUGHTER WROUGHT AMONG TEUTON INFANTRY BY MACHINE GUNS.

FRENCH CAPITAL BOMBARDED

Main Body of British Falling Back Deliberately and Without Confusion—French Are Optimistic.

London.—"Fresh hostile attacks developed have great strength on the whole battle front," says Field Marshal Haig's report from headquarters, "and they have continued throughout the day."

"South of Peronne the enemy succeeded, after heavy fighting, in crossing the Somme at certain points. These are being dealt with."

Berlin (via London).—Paris has been bombarded by German long-distance guns, according to the German official communication.

The statements add that the British in their retirement are burning French towns and villages and that between the Somme and the Oise the Germans are still going forward.

Enormous quantities of booty have been taken by the Germans, according to the statement which follows:

"Between the Somme and the Oise our corps are fighting their way forward." Chauny has been taken.

"Our booty in war material is enormous. The British, in their retirement, are burning French towns and villages."

"We have bombarded the fortress of Paris with long-distance guns."

"A gigantic struggle is taking place for Bapaume. A battle is in progress on the Transloy-Combes-Maurepas line."

"The Somme has been crossed at many points in our attack between Peronne and Ham."

The withdrawal of the British forces along the battle front in France was long ago planned in the event of the Germans attacking in great force. This announcement comes from the British front through the Associated Press correspondent, who describes the operation of the British army as a masterly withdrawal, made possible by gallant shock troops in the front lines, who checked the advance of the Germans, while artillery, machine gun and rifle fire worked appalling slaughter among the masses of German infantry as they were sent forward, thus enabling the main body of the British to fall back deliberately and without confusion.

This army, it is declared, has been conserved, and up to the present very few counter-attacks have been made against the Germans. Where the British have stormed the Germans' newly acquired positions they have driven them back. But each mile of advance makes the bringing up of supplies to the German artillery and infantry more and more difficult, and unquestionably the British strategy, as demonstrated since the beginning of the great attack, is to let the enemy, so far as he may, wear himself out against a powerful defense.

Both British and French forces, where their lines meet south of St. Quentin, are watching events with optimistic eyes.

Paris.—The German "monster cannon" which has been bombarding Paris has been located in the forest of St. Gobain, west of Laon, and exactly 122 kilometers (approximately 76 miles) from Paris city hall. The gun bombarded Paris during the greater part of Sunday.

The day was ushered in by loud explosions from the 16-inch shells, and immediately the alarm to take cover was sounded. This occurred at 4:55 o'clock and many persons sought shelter, but greater numbers of them appeared in the streets on their way to the churches, which were almost as well filled as usual. The women who sell palm leaves on Palm Sundays, did their usual business.

LIBERTY LOAN PROBLEMS ARE UP TO CONGRESS

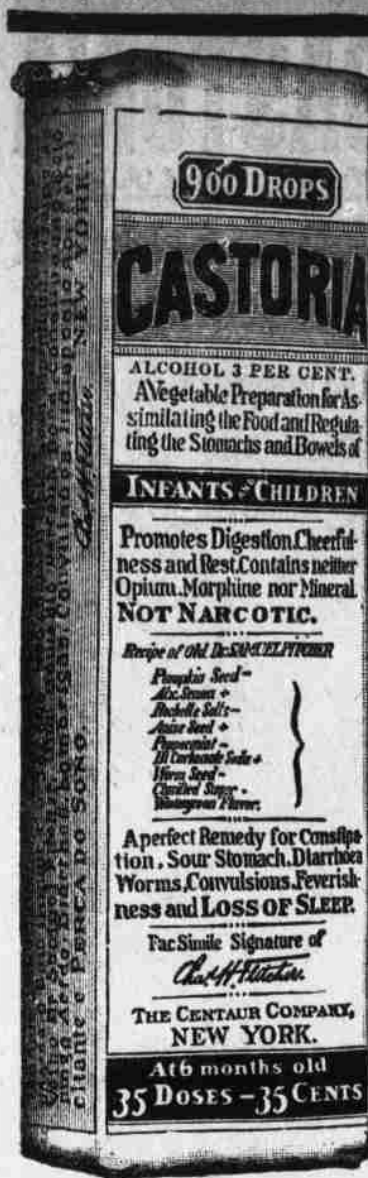
Washington.—Liberty loan legislation and the controversy over war machinery reorganization are the engrossing topics before Congress.

Announcement by Secretary McAdoo of the size and terms of the billions of new war bonds to be followed by hope consideration of the bill, whose passage is desired within the fortnight intervening before the new liberty loan campaign. The fight over war organization will open in senate.

FORCED BY OWN PEOPLE TO MAKE GREAT DRIVE

Washington.—The German offensive, says the war department's weekly communiqué proves that the German militarists have been forced to attempt a gigantic feat of arms.

While the great attack has been able to make headway, no definite enveloping movement has been outlined, the communication says, and it would be premature to express opinions on the tactical phases with a combat situation inevitably changing.



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AMERICANS NOT FISH EATERS

Consumption, Per Capita, in United States is Less Than in Almost Every Other Country.

The average American eats 20 pounds of fish a year. This includes oyster, shrimp and mussels. One dietary authority states, according to Leslie's Weekly, that 200 miles inland from our three coasts the consumption of fish food, per person, is less than a half pound annually.

Each inhabitant of the British Isles has fish on his bill of fare to the extent of 100 pounds every 12 months, while the fish consumption, per capita, in Germany is 120 pounds; Holland, 180 pounds; Norway, Sweden and Denmark, 150 pounds; China, 225 pounds, and Japan nearly 500 pounds.

Latin-Americans are the only people who eat less fish than do the inhabitants of the United States.

There is absolutely no sane argument against the larger and more extensive use of fish as a daily diet throughout the length and breadth of this land. It is ideal as a food. It is highly nutritious and rich in proteins. It is most easily digested. It contains in great abundance the chemical ingredients for making bone, muscle and tissue. As a food nothing detrimental can possibly be said against it. Fish, with the exception of a few species, are clean feeders.

GREATEST SHEEP PENS

Gigantic Pens at Denver Have Capacity of 350,000 Head.

Occupying a floor space of more than eight acres, Denver has opened the largest sheep sheds in the world. The only exercises dedicating the immense structure was the "turning in" of nearly 35,000 sheep into the pens on the upper and lower decks.

The building is double decked, and constructed so that other decks can be added if required. At present the shed has a capacity of 350,000 head. It is of solid concrete, reinforced by steel; is 400 feet long and 380 feet wide.

The structure cost \$150,000.

HERON IS EXPERT FISHERMAN

Great Bird Impresses Watcher by Great Skill With Which He Uses His Long Bill in Water.

There is nothing of more interest than following a stream, either by boat or on foot, and not the least among the surprises coming to you—always welcome surprises—is the starting of a great blue heron far ahead, the giant bird being interrupted while fishing in some shallow water where the minnows and tadpoles congregate.

The herons all, and the great blues particularly, are expert fishermen; not, of course, with rod and line, but as giggers, the implement being the natural one of their long bills. If you can make a long and successful sneak ahead and spot one of these birds through your field glass, or even with sharp, long-distance eyes, the slender creature standing like a statue and quite as motionless for many minutes at a time or stalking slowly along, rarely more than half-leg deep in the water, to a new spot, and then see him by a downward stroke of his long neck and bill which hardly ever misses make a crack at a finny titbit, you will be impressed also with his skill.

OLD WOMAN IS KILLED

Lived for Years in a Place Built for Chickens.

J. K. Ewing, humane officer of East St. Louis, and Mrs. Jane Law, truant officer, recently asked County Judge Messick for an order to commit Mrs. Anstee Latteur, eighty-five years old, to an asylum or home. This action was taken after it was learned that until recently Mrs. Thompson lived in a shed in the rear of the home of her granddaughter, Mrs. Inez Thompson, at No. 1227 North Forty-ninth street. A part of the shed was used as a chicken house.

Since fire threatened the shed last Monday, Mrs. Latteur has lived in her granddaughter's kitchen. Mrs. Thompson told Ewing her grandmother was feeble and unable to walk and had been satisfied with her quarters in the shed.

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LUZIANNE coffee

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